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CIA Sues 2d Ex-Agent for Book Profits

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The Justice Department accused another former CIA officer-turned-author yesterday of violating his secrecy agreement with the agency and filed suit for the profits from his book.

Acting in the wake of a controversial Supreme Court decision that bolstered its censorship powers, the government charged CIA veteran John R. Stockwell with breach of contract for publishing the book without first submitting it to the CIA for review.

An expose of CIA operations in Angola in 1975-76, the book, "In Search of Enemies—A CIA Story," accused the agency of mounting covert military operations and then lying to Congress and the public to keep them secret.

A 12-year veteran of the CIA, Stockwell quit the agency in March 1976 after an eight-month assignment as chief of the CIA's Angola Task Force in Washington. The charges he made public at the time triggered a Senate investigation.

His book was published in 1978 by W. W. Norton & Co. of New York and went through four printings as well as a paperback edition.

The government's civil suit, filed in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, was patterned after a similar action upheld by the Supreme Court last month against former CIA officer Frank Snepp.

In that case, the high court sanctioned the CIA's secrecy agreement—under which employees promise to submit any writings about the agency for

review—and held that the government may impose such restrictions even in the absence of an explicit agreement.

Now living in Austin, Tex., Stockwell said he was "a little surprised" that, in an election year, the government would be so heavy-handed. Every newspaper I've read has been screaming about the Snepp decision.

In any event, Stockwell said sales of the book, which he estimated at about 40,000 copies including the paperback editions, have peaked out. "Every penny I made from it has long since been spent," he declared. He said he is now working on other projects as a freelance television journalist.

The government said in the suit

that Stockwell had been "unjustly enriched" by profits, advances, royalties "and other advantages" stemming from the book and it asked the courts to order an accounting and to direct Stockwell to "relinquish the proceeds."

Under an agreement he signed on joining the CIA in 1964, Stockwell pledged not to publish or participate in the publication of any information or material, relating to the agency, its activities or intelligence activities generally, even after leaving the CIA, "without specific prior approval by the agency."

In the foreword to his book, he said he did not feel bound by the agreement because his CIA recruiters had lied about the true nature of the agency's clandestine services, because he was convinced they needed reform, and because he felt his right to freedom of speech took precedence.

The Supreme Court dismissed the First Amendment argument in a footnote to its Snepp decision, saying "the government has a compelling interest in protecting both the secrecy of information important to the national security and the appearance of confidentiality so essential to the effective operation of our foreign intelligence service."

Although he signed the standard secrecy form on joining the CIA, Stockwell said yesterday he refused to sign the so-called "exit agreement," repeating the promise, when he left. He recalled debating about it with a CIA security officer.

"He spent about 30 minutes trying to persuade me to sign and I spent 30 minutes saying no," Stockwell said yesterday. "I said, 'You're not paying me any money anymore. Why should I sign a contract saying I'll do something for you?' It never occurred to him to ask whether I planned to write a book."

Stockwell has accused both former secretary of state Henry A. Kissinger and former CIA director William Colby of lying to Congress about the CIA's Angolan operations. He maintains the activities paved the way for massive Soviet and Cuban intervention in the civil war there. The Soviet-backed faction won.

Stockwell yesterday also chided CIA Director Stansfield Turner for suggesting that whistleblowers such as himself get "huge advances" for their CIA exposes.

"Anybody knows that you don't get huge advances for books like that," Stockwell said, indicating his advance came to about \$20,000. "If my book made \$50,000," he said, "it also cost me \$10,000 in research and travel costs and, I'd say, about \$15,000 in taxes. That leaves about \$25,000 to pay the rent and everything else for three years. By comparison, I would have made about \$95,000 working for the CIA."